



Uniform Polling Hours Cost Certification Survey and Other Updates

Office of the State Auditor
Division of Local Mandates

June 10, 2026

DLM Survey Portal Link

<https://massosa.forms.highgear.app/portal/DLMPortal>

Link provided in the chat.

Please bookmark!

Make sure to whitelist webserver@highgear.app to get all of our survey portal emails!

Important Online Resources

DLM Survey Portal Navigation Aide:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/dlm-survey-portal-navigation-aide/download>

Upcoming Cost Certification Survey Launch Dates and Deadlines:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/upcoming-cost-certification-survey-launch-dates-and-deadlines>

Early Voting Frequently Asked Questions:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/early-voting-cost-certification-faqs>

Uniform Polling Hours Frequently Asked Questions:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/uniform-polling-hours-cost-certification-faqs>

Links provided in the chat. Please bookmark!

What is the Uniform Polling Hours Law?

Massachusetts Acts of
1983, c. 503

Increased the # of
hours that polling
locations are required
to be open for state
elections, from **10
hours to 13 hours**

— What is the purpose of this cost certification survey?

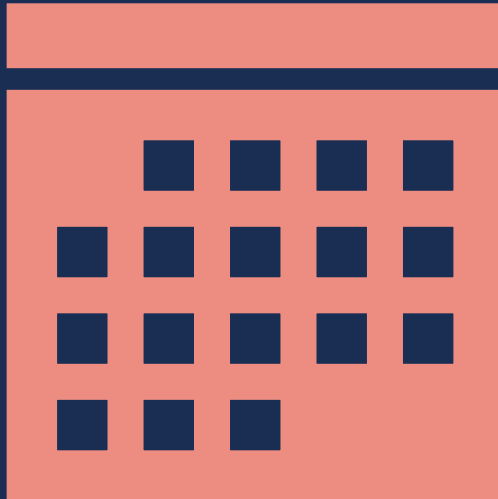


Uniform Polling Hours refer to ***the additional three hours of polling operations between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m. for each presidential primary, state primary, and general election.***



DLM manages a certification process for “the incremental costs attributed to [the Uniform Polling Hours Law] and estimated to be incurred by each city and town in the next fiscal year” for each of these elections.

Cost Certification Schedule



Presidential Primaries

- Every four calendar years (in even years between presidential election years).
- **Ex.** Estimated expenses for the March 2028 presidential primary (FY 2028) will be collected this summer.

September State Primaries and November General Elections

- Every odd calendar year.
- **Ex.** Estimated expenses for the September 2028 state primary and November 2028 general election (FY 2029) will be collected in spring 2027.

UPH Cost Certification Timeline: FY 2028 Presidential Primary



Survey Launch Date: June 10, 2026 (today!)



Covers the **March 2028** presidential primary



Submissions due **June 24, 2026** for most municipalities



For municipalities with elections during June 2026: submissions may be submitted **up to 2 weeks** after the date of the election

What Uniform Polling Hours expenses will be certified?

- DLM will certify ***estimated additional or increased expenses*** attributable to the Uniform Polling Hours law for a given fiscal year.
 - Expenses may be attributable to the additional 3 hours of polling operations between 7-10 a.m. or the required opening of the polls at 7 a.m. *only to the extent expenses would otherwise not be incurred.*

— Estimated Compensation for Temporary Election Workers



DLM will certify ***estimated compensation*** for election workers who will be hired specifically to work the first three hours of polling operations.



Municipalities may submit ***estimated compensation*** for hours that will be worked between 7am-10am (max. 3 hours of compensation for each worker) if the work is essential to polling operations.

Estimated compensation for polling location set-up before 7 a.m. by temporary election workers is **not eligible for certification.**

— Estimated Compensation: Temporary Election Workers (paid hourly)

- If a municipality will hire **5 temporary election workers** who will staff polling operations from 7 a.m. until 10 a.m., then estimated compensation for **15 total hours** may be submitted (3 hours for each temporary worker)
- If a municipality will hire **5 temporary election workers** who will staff polling operations from 8 a.m. until 11 a.m., then estimated compensation for **10 total hours** may be submitted (limited to hours between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m. even though within 3-hour maximum).

— Estimated Compensation: Temporary Election Workers (paid at a flat rate)

- If temporary election workers will be paid different flat rates ***based on the number of hours worked on election day***, the extent of the flat rate for hours that will be worked between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m. may be submitted for certification.
- **Examples:**
 - If a municipality will hire **5 temporary election workers** who will be working the entire day (13 hours) at a flat rate and will be working from 7 a.m. until 10 a.m., then estimated compensation for **15 total hours** may be submitted (3 hours for each temporary worker).
 - If a municipality will hire **5 temporary election workers** who be working a partial shift at a flat rate that will cover hours between 8 a.m. until 11 a.m., then estimated compensation for **10 total hours** may be submitted (limited to hours between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m. even though within 3-hour maximum).

— Estimated Compensation: Temporary Election Workers (paid at a flat rate)

- Estimated compensation for temporary election workers who will be paid a flat rate for election day *irrespective of hours worked* is **not** eligible for certification.
- If the flat rate differs based on role/position but is the same rate *irrespective of hours worked* in a particular role/position, the estimated compensation is **not** eligible for certification.
- Examples:
 - If a municipality will hire **5 temporary election workers** who will each be paid a flat rate of \$500, and the election workers will be paid their rate irrespective of hours worked, then estimated compensation should **not** be submitted.
 - If a municipality will hire **1 temporary election worker** at a flat rate of \$250 and **1 temporary election worker** at a flat rate of \$500, and the election workers will be paid their rate irrespective of hours worked, then estimated compensation should **not** be submitted.

— Estimated Compensation for Regular Employees

- DLM will certify *estimated compensation* for regular employees who will be working the first three hours of polling operation if the compensation will be an *additional or increased* expense for your municipality.
- Municipalities may submit this estimated compensation if it meets **all** the following criteria:
 - Working the first three hours of polling operations will cause the employee to work more than their regular number of hours.
 - The estimated compensation will cause the employee to receive more than their regular amount of compensation.
 - The submitted estimated compensation **only** reflects the extent of the additional or increased expense.

— Note on Regular Salaried Employees



Estimated compensation expenses will generally **not** be certified for salaried employees, as they typically receive the same compensation regardless of hours worked.



Estimated compensation expenses for salaried employees may be considered in limited instances (e.g. where there is an agreement granting additional compensation to a salaried employee for the first three hours of polling operations if the hours are additional hours worked).

— Estimated Compensation for Regular Employees: Example #1

- Employee Y starts at 9 a.m. but will report on 7 a.m. on Election Day, **2 hours** before their regular start time. **Two (2) hours may be attributable to Uniform Polling Hours.**
 - If the employee regularly works 20 hours in a regular pay period but will work 22 hours due to the change in start time, the **2 hours** are **additional** hours attributable to Uniform Polling Hours and may be submitted.
 - If the employee regularly works 20 hours in a regular pay period but will continue to do so regardless of the change in start time, the **2 hours** are **not additional** hours and should not be submitted.

— Estimated Compensation for Regular Employees: Example #2

- Employee Z starts at 10 a.m. but will report on 6 a.m. on Election Day, **4 hours** before their regular start time. **Three (3) out of the 4 hours may be attributable to Uniform Polling Hours.**
 - If the employee regularly works 20 hours in a regular pay period but will work 24 hours due to the change in start time, the **3 hours** are **additional** hours attributable to Uniform Polling Hours and may be submitted.
 - If the employee regularly works 20 hours in a regular pay period but will continue to do so regardless of the change in start time, the **3 hours** are **not additional** hours and should not be submitted.

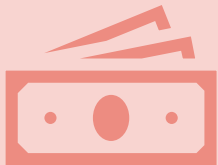
— Estimated Compensation for Public Safety Officials

- DLM will consider estimated compensation expenses for police officers and constables who will be detailed to polling locations on Election Day before 10 a.m. if the compensation will be an ***additional*** or ***increased*** expense.
- For public safety officials who are **not** regular employees of the municipality:
 - Municipalities may submit ***estimated compensation*** for hours that will be worked between 7am-10am (max. 3 hours of compensation for each official)
- For public safety officials who are regular employees of the municipality:
 - Municipalities may submit estimated compensation if the hours meet **all** the following criteria:
 - Working the first three hours of polling operations will cause the employee to work more than their regular number of hours.
 - The estimated compensation will cause the employee to receive more than their regular amount of compensation.
 - The submitted estimated compensation **only** reflects the extent of the additional or increased expense.

Number of Public Safety Officials



M.G.L. c. 54, s. 72, provides that the “*select board, board of selectmen, town council or city council of each city and town, in consultation with its election officers and registrars, shall detail a sufficient number of police officers or constables for each building that contains the polling place for 1 or more precincts at every election therein to preserve order and to protect the election officers and supervisors from any interference with their duties and to aid in enforcing the laws relating to elections.*”



If estimated compensation for **more than one** public safety official **per polling location** is submitted, municipalities must provide an explanation why as well as a rationale/calculation behind the provided estimated compensation.

Estimated Compensation Expenses: Polling Location Setup

- Polling location set-up expenses will typically be **ineligible** for certification.

Examples:

- A municipality will need to hire temporary workers to perform set-up at a polling location before 7 a.m. These additional hours should **not** be submitted for certification.
- A municipality will pay a separate fixed payment of \$250 to three DPW employees for polling location set-up. This estimated compensation should **not** be submitted for certification.

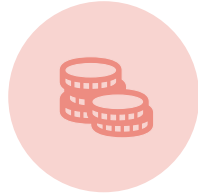
Estimated Compensation Expenses: Polling Location Setup

- Municipalities may submit estimated compensation for consideration for municipal employees performing polling location set-up before 7 a.m. if the hours meet **all** the following criteria:
 - Working the first three hours of polling operations will cause the employee to work more than their regular number of hours.
 - The estimated compensation will cause the employee to receive more than their regular amount of compensation.
 - The submitted estimated compensation **only** reflects the extent of the additional or increased expense.

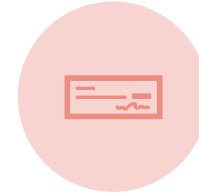
— Expenses NOT Eligible for Certification



Early voting costs (not covered by this survey)



Expenses incurred after elections (not covered by this survey)



Estimated expenses for special elections (not covered by this survey)



Polling location rentals (not specific to the first three hours of polling operations)



Meals and travel expenses (optional expenses)



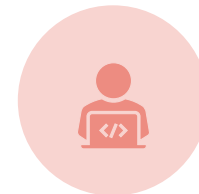
Signage (incidental local administration expense)



Costs for training of poll workers (not specific to the first three hours of polling operations)



Printing of voter lists (not specific to the first three hours of polling operations)



Voting machine programming (not specific to the first three hours of polling operations)

Disbursement of UPH Funds



DLM sends UPH certifications to the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office to begin the disbursement process.



UPH funds are treated differently than early voting funds:

May be deposited in a special revenue fund and may be expended without further appropriation


Are not added to free cash

Must be spent on election expenses

Early Voting Cost Certification Surveys

For municipalities that have **not yet submitted** or hold any of the following elections **during the month of June**:

- Regularly scheduled local election
- Special local election)
- Special state election

 **24 hours** (or one business day) after the date of the election

*Please contact DLM at **617-727-0980** to schedule a meeting to ensure timely and complete responses.*

Upcoming Webinar

Wednesday, July 8, 2026
12pm-12:45pm

Topics and registration links are updated here:
<https://www.mass.gov/dlm-webinars>

Link provided in the chat. Please bookmark!

Contact Us

Email:

**[DLM.CostCertification@
MassAuditor.gov](mailto:DLM.CostCertification@MassAuditor.gov)**

**Office Number:
(617) 727-0980**

Questions?

Information as of June 10, 2026, and subject to change. For general informational purposes only; it does not constitute legal or other professional advice.